



Democratic Party of Garland Party Strategic Plan for 2019

The Democratic Party of Arkansas (DPA) requires local county parties to develop a strategic plan. The plan must address three areas: (1) enact actions to recruit and support democratic candidates running for office; (2) identify actions to promote the Democratic Party and democratic values; and (3) develop organizational and financial strategies that support county party operations.

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1. Candidate Recruitment & Support

The Democratic Party of Garland County (DPGC) recognizes that the election and appointment of Democratic Candidates at all levels of government is critical to the success of the party. Consequently, the DPGC will implement the following actions:

1.01 Identify all open positions upcoming in 2019.

The DPGC will create a spreadsheet listing elected political offices and appointed positions in Garland County, including local school boards, City offices, County offices state legislative offices and advisory boards. This list will be used to identify offices/positions Democratic candidates should pursue.

1.02 Identify and recruit potential candidates.

The DPGC wants to recruit a deep bench of candidates. To this end, a “Candidate Committee” has been formed and ongoing recruitment efforts will be pursued including using interpersonal contacts to recruit potential candidates.

1.03 Identify local networking opportunities for candidates.

The DPGC will identify networking opportunities including neighborhood associations, civic clubs, and business and professional associations. Potential candidates will be encouraged to interact with such groups in order to promote name recognition and foster support.

1.04 Offer candidate training on campaign operations and legal requirements.

Members of the DPGC have extensive expertise in mounting local elective campaigns as well as complying with financial disclosure requirements. Plans call for offering a one-day class for candidates regarding: (1) organizing a campaign; (2) formulating effective campaign messaging and election strategies and tactics; (3) using social media in political campaigns; and (4) compliance with state financial disclosure requirements.

1.05 Offer leadership and skills training for candidates.

The DPGC will promote opportunities for candidates to improve their public speaking skills and when requested, the DPGC will provide training on improving interpersonal skills intended to enhance a candidate’s ability to connect with voters.

1.06 Offer the DPGC Headquarters for use by Democratic candidates.

The DPGC maintains an office at 608 Grand Avenue, Hot Springs. Our headquarters is equipped with networked computer and a large 55” color display, a kitchenette, and a large meeting room. As scheduling allows, the space can be used for fundraising events, campaign rallies, etc.

1.07 Finance a “Candidate Support Fund” for the 2020 General Election.

The success of candidates will depend, at least in part, on the DPGC’s ability to offer financial support. Providing timely financial resources (specifically “seed money” early during the General Election campaign season) is especially important. To this end, the DPGC will continue its fundraising efforts to build up its “Candidate Support Fund” for use after the 2020 Democratic primary. Funds will be provided only to Democratic nominees in contested races.

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2. Promoting the Democratic Party

The Democratic Party of Garland County recognizes that it is necessary to promote democratic values in our community as a means of building support for the party and its candidates. Consequently, the DPGC will implement the following community outreach and advocacy activities in Garland County:

2.01 Integrate free local news media coverage to promote DPGC messaging and events.

Use of free media—including local radio and the newspaper—can expand the “reach” of the DPGC’s messaging and promotional efforts. To this end, the DPGC will promote party activities, rallies, and events to local media outlets. Distribution of press releases will be routine and a DPGC spokesperson will be made available whenever possible for media interviews.

2.02 Have DPGC Representatives at government meetings to voice the political concerns of our members.

Subject to available staffing, have a DPGC representative present at city, county, and state government meetings and events to advocate for the interest of our members and report back to the DPGC membership on issues of interest occurring at said meetings.

2.03 Create and distribute “Issue Alerts.”

The party will distribute to DPGC members and others information about pending legislation and how to contact their legislators. The intent is to keep people informed on important issues and encourage individuals to interact with their elected representatives. This will keep voters engaged in the political process and promote the idea that the DPGC is an effective partner in promoting and protecting issues of public importance.

2.04 Promote voter registration efforts.

The DPGC will continue its ongoing voter registration efforts in Garland County. The goal is to engage as many local residents as possible in the political process.

2.05 Publish a weekly email newsletter.

The DPGC’s weekly email newsletter reinforces Party goals and informs our members about important issues and upcoming events. The newsletter promotes political engagement.

2.06 Utilize social media and the internet to promote the DPGC.

The DPGC will employ social and web media platforms (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, email and the DPGC website) to promote the party, upcoming events and important political issues. The intent is to expand the “reach” of DPGC’s messaging efforts and enhance political engagement with the larger community.

2.07 Promote writing “Letters to the Editor.”

The DPGC will encourage letter writing efforts to the local newspaper (the Hot Springs *Sentinel-Record*) addressing issues of concern to Democrats. The opinion page of the local newspaper is widely read in our community, especially among older residents (the demographic with the highest voter participation rate). The DPGC will offer free copy-editing services to potential letter writers. Such letters will expand the reach and promotion of the DPGC’s goals and platform.

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3. Operational and Financial Activities

The Democratic Party of Garland County recognizes the need to have in place an effective organization to promote our candidates, support the Democratic Party, and connect with voters. In terms of fundraising, the DPGC has adopted a “work smarter, not harder” philosophy; the end goal is to maximize income without overwhelming the party’s volunteer base with elaborate or exhausting work assignments. To this end, the DPGC will implement the following actions to support party operations:

3.01 Make DPGC member meetings engaging and educational events.

There will be a reduced focus on conveying information about routine DPGC administrative and operational matters at our member meetings. If needed, such information can be distributed to attendees via handouts or email. Instead the meetings will have a speaker focused on an engaging topic intended to promote the Party and Democratic issues and values. Operational matters will be administered by the DPGC’s

Executive Committee; Executive Committee meeting minutes will be made available to DPGC members upon request. The goal is to expand attendance at our monthly meetings, energize attendees and encourage greater political engagement.

3.02 Continue the outreach efforts of the Sunshine Committee.

The DPGC recognizes that political engagement often benefits from a “personal touch.” Promoting interpersonal ties creates stronger connections among our membership. To this end, the DPGC will send notes or cards expressing congratulations, sympathy, or concern to our members in the event of illness, bereavement, birthdays or other milestone events.

3.03 Develop and expand our volunteer pool.

Recently the DPGC has seen an influx of people willing to volunteer in support of the Party and its activities. The DPGC will use interested volunteers to staff our Headquarters and to assist in political events sponsored by DPGC in Garland County.

3.04 Staff the DPGC Headquarters.

The DPGC maintains an office/headquarters at 608 Grand Avenue, Hot Springs. It is our goal to have a trained volunteer on site during the week to answer calls and provide assistance to visitors. The DPGC will encourage all volunteers to aid in our outreach activities.

3.05 Use the VAN list to recruit DPGC members and expand support in the community.

The DPGC will use information provided by VAN to identify potential supporters in our community and invite them to join the Party as well as take part in our outreach events. The DPGC recognizes that direct personal contact with likeminded individuals is an effective way to motivate those individuals to take an active role in promoting and supporting the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates.

3.06 Develop contacts with other community organizations and interest groups.

The DPGC will undertake efforts to identify and establish a working relationship with neighborhood associations, civic clubs, and business and professional associations on issues of common interest. This will afford the DPGC an opportunity to recruit additional members, foster support for the Democratic Party in the larger community, and reinforce the DPGC’s goal to protect and promote the interests of Garland County residents on important issues.

3.07 Utilize the DPGC Headquarters to its full potential.

The DPGC maintains an office equipped with networked computer and a large 55” color display, a kitchenette and a large meeting room. As scheduling allows, the space can be used for fundraising, campaign and promotional events, meetings, rallies, training and other events. Our intention is to host more actionable events at our Democratic Headquarters to promote the positions of our members and other Garland County residents on important issues.

3.08 When possible carry out DPGC activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

As may be practical, our party need to be more environmentally friendly. We should step up our recycling efforts and cut back on disposable single use plasticware items at our fundraising events.

3.09 Complete three fundraising mailings.

The DPGC has scheduled three fundraising solicitations for CY 2019 with dates to be determined. In order to encourage contributions, each mailing will seek funds for a specific purpose (e.g. to keep the headquarters open, to support our candidate fund, etc.). Also, the mailings will contain other information about ongoing and upcoming DPGC activities. Our mailing list of potential donors contains nearly 400 names. Previous experience has shown that such efforts are very cost effective—bringing in between 3 to 9 times the amount spent on the mailing.

3.10 Host four fundraising events/dinners at the DPGC Headquarters.

As part of its “work smarter, not harder” fundraising philosophy, the DPGC has determined that multiple smaller events are the best way to maximize income given the party’s limited pool of volunteers. Plans call for holding quarterly fundraising events/dinners at the DPGC Headquarters (or another appropriate venue). In the past, such events have proven financially successful without overtaxing the DPGC’s volunteers.

3.11 Host smaller monthly events and gatherings to promote the DPGC and raise funds.

Such events can include lectures, informal parties and concerts.

3.12 Solicit funds at DPGC events and meetings.

The DPGC realizes that having sufficient monies to fund operations is critical if the Party is to be engaged in the larger community and electorally successful. To this end, where appropriate, the DPGC will solicit funds from attendees at all DPGC-sponsored events.

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_____ Date

_____ DPGC Chair Hayden Shamel

_____ DPGC Secretary Timothy Yates